

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 7984

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: PS AND PCP TRADE BARBS

REF: LISBON IR 6 879 0609 76

SUMMARY: DESPITE PREVIOUS DENIAL OF ANY PS PARTICIPATION ON "PEOPLE UNITED" ELECTION LISTS, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE SUSPENDED THREE PARTY MEMBERS FOR APPEARING ON THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LISTS. RENEWED SOCIALIST RESOLVE TO RESIST THE STEPPED-UP PCP PRESSURES FOR A POPULAR FRONT FROM BELOW SHOULD CUT SHORT ANY COMMUNIST GLOATING AT THE PS GAFFE. END SUMMARY

1. SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS TRADE BARBS: THE WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN THE WAKE OF THE PCP CONGRESS CONTINUES. THE LATEST EXCHANGES INCLUDE:
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-- A NOV 16 REFUTATION BY THE PS THAT ANY SOCIALISTS WERE

CANDIDATES ON THE LISTS OF THE PCP-DOMINATED "PEOPLE UNITED ELECTION FRONT."

-- A SHARP PCP REAFFIRMATION THAT ITS LISTS INCLUDED SOCIALISTS.

-- A NOV 17 ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PS THAT THREE PARTY MEMBERS HAD BEEN SUSPENDED FOR APPEARING "PEOPLE UNITED" LISTS IN VIOLATION OF PARTY INSTRUCTIONS. THE SOCIALISTS COMBINED THE ANNOUNCEMENT WITH A STRONG ATTACK ON CUNHAL'S LATEST EFFORTS TO WOO THE MILITARY. HOLDING UP THE MIRAGE OF NEW MILITARY GOVERNMENTS, THE PS NOTED, IN NO WAY CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL.

2. ARMY STAFF AND RC ON RUMORS OF MILITARY DISCONTENT: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, FOLLOWING ITS NOV 17 MEETING, ISSUED A STATEMENT REQUESTING THE PRESS TO REFRAIN FROM DESTABILIZING SPECULATION IN VIEW OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE RC ALSO:

-- CONFIRMED THAT AN INQUIRY WAS BEING CONDUCTED BY THE AIR FORCE, WITH REPRESENTATION FROM THE PRESIDENCY, INTO THE ALLEGED MEETING BETWEEN RC MEMBER CANTO E CASTRO AND NFLA LEADER HOLDEN ROBERTO.

-- ANNOUNCED THE UPCOMING VISIT OF RC MEMBERS BG CHARAIS, LTC CARDOSO, AND CDR CRESPO TO ROMANIA. THE ARMY STAFF AND THE LISBON MILITARY REGION ISSUED STATEMENTS ON NOV 18 DENYING ANY DISAGREEMENT OVER THE "NORMAL TRANSFER" OF CPT SALGUIERO MAIA FROM THE SANTAREM CAVALRY SCHOOL TO AN OBSCURE ASSIGNMENT IN THE AZORES (REFTEL). THE ARMY STAFF SAID MAIA HAD DENIED COMPLAINING TO THE PRESS. WHILE MAIA IS A NOTORIOUS LOUDMOUTH, HE IS ALSO AN AUTHENTIC HERO OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT AND THE IMPACT OF HIS TRANSFER ON HIS FELLOW JUNIOR OFFICERS REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

3. COMMENT: THE SOCIALISTS WERE TOO QUICK ON THE DRAW IN DENYING ANY PS PARTICIPATION ON PEOPLE UNITED LISTS. BUT THE STRIDENCY OF THE SOCIALISTS RESPONSE AND THE RENEWED RESOLVE IT REFLECTS TO RESIST THE STEPPED-UP PCP OFFENSE FOR A POPULAR FRONT FROM BELOW SHOULD CUT SHORT ANY COMMUNIST GLOATING.

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